



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
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Minutes of the Berrys Creek Technical Advisory Group  
May 2, 1985

The third meeting of the TAG took place at the DEP offices in Trenton. The following people were in attendance. Hank Garie (NJDEP), Bob Will (Corps, NY District), Oksana Yaremko (Corps, NY District), Paul Galluzzi (HMDC), Rich Dime (NJDEP), George Harvell (Velsicol), Fred Ziegler (Morton Thiokol), Larry Schmidt (NJDEP). Also in attendance were Joe Maher (NJDEP), Jim Orr (ERM, Southeast), and John Ciancia (EPA, Region II).

The meeting was called to order by Larry Schmidt, Executive Secretary shortly after 1:00pm. The minutes of the January 23 TAG meeting which was held at the HMDC offices and the February 26 TAG meeting held in Vicksburg, Mississippi were approved as drafted with one minor correction. Page 2 of the Vicksburg minutes were changed to correctly identify Dr. Bartha with the menthylation research and Dr. Meyerson with the form of mercury research.

The TAG commenced with a discussion on the Vicksburg meeting which was set up by Dr. Dick Lee of the Waterways Experiment Station (WES). Dr. Lee arranged for a number of WES scientists to meet with members of the TAG to transfer information and gain insights into the Berrys Creek situation. It was noted that the WES people gave the TAG members encouragement on its approach and provided excellent suggestions on how to move forward. The Vicksburg Group concluded that Berrys Creek is a complex situation and based on previous WES work, the Corps' scientists did not have all the answers. TAG members who attended the Vicksburg meeting felt that WES could be an asset in the future and the February meeting was good in bringing the Corps scientists up to speed.

A question was raised as to whether or not WES could be used for applied research specific to Berrys Creek. Bob Will, the Corps representative, indicated that WES could be used pending availability of time and funding. Mr. Schmidt was instructed to pursue this matter with Dr. Lee. Also Dr. Lee indicated at the Vicksburg meeting that he would give TAG a list of competent contractors in the field of mercury contamination in aquatic environments. Mr. Schmidt will also follow-up with Dr. Lee to get that listing.

A question was raised as to the suitability and availability of the Corps' TABS II model if sediment transportation modelling were to be utilized as part of the RI/FS. The TAG members agreed that TABS II was a state-of-the-art model but no model currently can factor in potential chemical interactions along with sediment transport and therefore, the project's modelling needs may be beyond state-of-the-art. The group also agreed that any transport study must be marsh specific and would require a major effort in order to determine mercury movements in and out of a marsh system.

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Jim Orr was then called upon to provide a status report on Task I, Literature Search. Mr. Orr provided the TAG members with a Status Summary and status of sub-tasks which have been submitted as of May 1 (copy attached). He indicated that the Evaluation Criteria for site specific data needs to be reviewed by the TAG, as a critical element in completing Task I.

The Task I discussion moved to project manager Joe Maher and the approach that he has taken in processing sub-task submissions by ERM Southeast. Joe differentiated between draft quality submissions and deliverable submissions for the purposes of TAG review. Most of the submissions to-date have only been reviewed by Hank Garie and Rich Dime of the DEP with informal feedback, mostly by phone, to ERM Southeast. Joe Maher also indicated some difficulty in reproducing the submissions for further distribution to TAG members. He suggested that ERM send "final draft submissions" in sufficient numbers so as to avoid time delays for reproduction.

It was also agreed that henceforth Mr. Schmidt would direct the flow of paperwork to TAG members in a more formalized distribution system. Mr. Schmidt indicated that he would develop a master form to log submissions and review comments in order to avoid the uneven distribution that has occurred over the last 2-3 months.

It was also agreed by the TAG members that a two week turn around time should be placed on the sub-task submissions made to date. During the meeting xerox copies were made and hopefully each TAG member present now has a complete set of submissions. Mr. Schmidt asked ERM to provide at least one additional set of sub-task documents for Dr. Lee at WES.

TAG members also recommended that the SAC be advised on the need to have a full time project manager. TAG agreed that Joe Maher should be that project manager and that his current case load be reassigned to others in order to free him to keep the Berry's Creek project moving within the projected schedule.

The TAG then returned to the status of Task I and specifically to the General Literature Topic Summary - Nature of Mercury in the Environment. In order to expedite the timing in reviewing this document, it was agreed that Jim Orr would send it out to all TAG members with a cover memo to the Executive Secretary.

The summary of Task I concluded with a discussion of site mapping. ERM Southeast will try to compile maps at various scales covering both the drainage basin and the Ventron/Velsicol site area. The TAG discussed various options on how to map the study area and the possible integration of the mapping into the Geographic Information System housed within the DEP's Office of Science and Research. This latter effort would be independent of Task I completion.

The agenda item regarding Task IV research was discussed in detail. Reference was made to the April 29 memo from Dr. Berkowitz to Larry Schmidt regarding the preparation of a Task IV Research Status Report. The discussion lead to an agreement that Hank Garie would take the lead in preparing a memo to the SAC on the agreed upon subject areas for research, general scope of the research, and the logistical and institutional aspects of implementing Task IV. A sub-group of TAG consisting of Hank Garie, Richard Dime and Fred Ziegler was organized to facilitate the outlining of research elements. The TAG sub-group agreed to meet on May 3 to finalize the preliminary recommendations. The sub-group will specifically assess the cost of research (is \$55,000 adequate?), the timing of the research (coordination with ongoing tasks), definition of the four general areas of research, and the contracting mechanism for the researchers. Hank Garie underscored the consensus of the TAG sub-group members that any submission to SAC on May 21 should be viewed as a starting point and not a detailed Research Studies Report as envisioned in the Berkowitz memo of April 29.

Paul Galluzzi of HMDC made a proposal to TAG which involved the study of mercury interactions following wetland disturbance at an industrial park site within the Berry's Creek drainage basin. Paul described a development plan which has been approved by the HMDC involving construction of 11 buildings (warehouses, distribution, or light industrial) on a site adjacent to the Ventron/Velsicol landfill. Mr. Galluzzi advised the TAG members that under the current HMDC Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance, a substantial portion of the Berry's Creek drainage basin, both uplands and wetlands is zoned for industrial and/or commercial uses. His research proposal could evaluate impacts on future development within the Berry's Creek Area. Mr. Ziegler supported the proposal as an appropriate mechanism for applied research. Mr. Schmidt, however, took great exception to the proposed research and the whole notion of development adjacent to the Velsicol site including the filling of tidal wetlands. He felt that development at this time is unwise since we cannot predict the ultimate environmental and health risks associated with mercury contamination and/or possible remedial actions. Mr. Schmidt indicated that he would pursue this matter in terms of the regulatory options of the DEP and the Corps of Engineers.

The meeting concluded at approximately 5:00 pm with an invitation to all TAG members to attend the SAC meeting on May 21.

Respectively submitted

Lawrence Schmidt, Executive Secretary

NOTE: -- Jim Orr turned over one copy of the Methodolgies Notebook as part of the Task I draft submission. The notebook was accepted by Mr. Schmidt and given to Hank Garie for review and comment.